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Yohichiroh Matsuno

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EXAMINER

TIMBLIN, ROBERT M

ART UNIT

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NOTIFICATION DATE

DELIVERY MODE

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ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/763,182	Applicant(s) MATSUNO ET AL.	
	Examiner ROBERT TIMBLIN	Art Unit 2167	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 February 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) See Continuation Sheet is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims pending in the application are 1,3-7,19-21,25,27-31,44,46,48,50,52,54,56,58,60,62-66,77-79,81,83-88,100,103,105,111,113,116,119 and 121.

Continuation of Disposition of Claims: Claims rejected are 1,3-7,19-21,25,27-31,44,46,48,50,52,54,56,58,60,62-66,77-79,81,83-88,100,103,105,111,113,116,119 and 121.

DETAILED ACTION

This office action corresponds to application 10/763,182 filed 1/26/2004.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's amendments have been entered. In the amendment filed herein:

Claims 1, 3, 19, 25, 27, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 77, 83, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 have been amended.

No claims have been cancelled.

Accordingly, claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 are pending.

Examiner's response to arguments begins on page 65 of this document.

Claim Objections

Examiner thanks Applicant for the correcting amendments concerning the previous objections. Accordingly, those objections have been withdrawn.

However, upon further examination, Claim 77 on page 25 is objected to because it appears to include a typographical error by reciting "regarding *a* only". Examiner recommends deleting 'a' to correct the supposed error.

35 USC § 101

Examiner thanks Applicant for the correcting amendments to obviate the previous 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections. Accordingly, the method claims 44, 46, 48, 50, 52,

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54, 100, 103, 105, 111, and 113 are seen to be tied to a statutory category by way of the amendments and thus accepted as statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 3-7, 19-21, 25, 27-31, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62-66, 77-79, 81, 83-88, 100, 103, 105, 111, 113, 116, 119, and 121 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by McFadden (U.S. Patent Application 2003/0126137). In the cited paragraphs, figures and drawing references, McFadden teaches:

Claim 1 and similar claim 44: A merge information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers);

means for receiving (0221) an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

means for (application 54) selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, paragraphs 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership

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criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for (application 54) selectively acquiring (0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a

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conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups a particular user is a member of.*")and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 3 and similar claim 27: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items acquires said designated user (0042) information items regarding said designated user from each of said plurality of user information providing means by using first use permission information (0012, using an access control list) that permits the use of each of said plurality of user information providing means (paragraph 0064).

Claim 4 and similar claim 28: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information acquisition means for selectively acquiring said first use permission information from

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each of said plurality of user information providing means (figures 5 and 8 and 0069; hub or spoke administrator authorization).

Claim 5 and similar claim 29: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises use permission information creation means for creating second use permission information that permits the use of said merge user information providing apparatus (0069-0073).

Claim 6 and similar claim 30: The merge information providing apparatus of the claim 5, wherein said use permission information creation means creates said second use permission information including said first use permission information by using said first use permission information (0030, 0178 and 0245).

Claim 7 and similar claims 31, 66, and 87: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises means for setting up each of said plurality of user information providing means according to a request (0060, 0062, 0067 and figure 5; creating a spoke).

Claim 19: An information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes

means for selectively providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of different information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding only a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) that have been merged into a single information item (38, 36; e.g. group record) in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032); and

a plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records), for providing a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users that are subordinate (e.g. spokes used by a user) to said means for providing said plurality of different information items (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said plurality of different information items (0032, figure 7 and 0045) regarding said designated user (0015) that have been merged into said single information item only including designated user information items regarding said designated user acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of user information providing means for providing the plurality of user information items regarding the plurality of users (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) communicates with said means for providing the plurality of different information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) that have been merged into the single information item in response to the request (e.g. requested update), and

wherein said means for providing the plurality of different information items regarding the designated user that have been merged into the single information item (38, 36; e.g. group record) in response to the request (e.g. requested update) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 20 : The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing means further comprises means for saving said plurality of different information items regarding said user (0003, 0030-0032, and figures 3 and 7; user records).

Claim 21: The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein said plurality of different information items regarding said user includes user information and/or group information of a group to which said user belongs, and wherein said group information includes user information and/or group information of at least one of said plurality of user information providing means (0029, 0064, and figure 9).

Claim 25: A managing apparatus, comprising:
a merge information providing apparatus (12) including
a processor (61);
and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions,
wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge
information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of
user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users
(0015), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user
characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond,
for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between
each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user
information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers);

means for transmitting a setup request (0010 and 0045; e.g. addition of a new
user record) regarding a set up of each of said plurality of a plurality of means for
providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032,
e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015), and

means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114,
0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support
dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one
or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the

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selection of members from the user space. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”)only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space.* Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”)only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended

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with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”)and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 44: A merge information providing method implemented in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing apparatus includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users

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(0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...”) between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records

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thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with

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said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 46: An information providing method in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising:

selectively providing (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes said user

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information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) providing means and a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items (38, 46, 0064) regarding a plurality of users (0015), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), a plurality of different information items regarding only a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) to said merge user information providing apparatus, said plurality of different information items (0032, figure 7 and 0045) regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045)

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be

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extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 48: A managing method implemented in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...” between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means (0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit

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the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 50 : A computer-implemented method for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing apparatus includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users

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(0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...”) between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items

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(0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 52: A computer-implemented method of providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said user information providing apparatus includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items a means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, said method comprising:

selectively providing (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes said user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) providing means (e.g. user record) and a plurality of means for (38, 46, 0064) providing a plurality of user information items

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regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) to said merge user information providing apparatus (12), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said plurality of different information items regarding only said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) acquired from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable

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to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 54: A computer-implemented method of managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, where when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing apparatus includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items a plurality of means for providing a

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plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items said method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items, (0015, member identifiers) regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...”)) between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items

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(0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means(0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 56: A processor-readable medium storing program code that includes processor-executable instructions for providing merge information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items, only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...” between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 58: A processor-readable medium that includes processor-executable instructions for providing information in a user information providing apparatus, said user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition

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request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising:

providing, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (12) that includes said user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) providing means (e.g. user record) and a plurality of means for (38, 46, 0064) providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) to said merge user information providing apparatus (12), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said plurality of different information items regarding said designated user only including designated user information items regarding said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) acquired from among said plurality of user

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information items regarding said plurality of users from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 60: A processor-readable medium storing program code that stores processor-executable instructions for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for

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selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items, only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a set up request for said plurality of user information items providing means(0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 62: A merge information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between

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each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers);

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) a first designated user information item (0042; e.g. a user membership record in a particular spoke) regarding only a designated user registered to a first one of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) of which use is permitted from among a said plurality of user information items, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one

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or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only a second designated user information item regarding the same said designated user registered to second one of said plurality user information item providing means (0009, 0013, and 0042; e.g. a user membership record in another particular spoke or group) from among said plurality of user information items, without distinguishing said designated user as to whether or not the use of said second one of said plurality user information item providing means is permitted; and

means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring only the first designated user information item (0042; e.g. a user membership record in a particular spoke) and said means for selectively acquiring only the second designated user information item (0009, 0013, and 0042; e.g. a user membership record in another particular spoke or group),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended

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with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only the first designated user information item (0042), said means for selectively acquiring only the second designated user information item (0009, 0013, and 0042; e.g. a user membership record in another particular spoke or group), and said means for merging communicate with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user, and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 63: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge information providing apparatus further comprises:

means for managing distinction information that distinguishes said designated user registered to at least one of said plurality user information providing means from the rest of said plurality of users (0015 and 0032).

Claim 64: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 63, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said designated user to at least one of said first or second designated

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user information acquisition means in response to a request from said at least one of said first or second designated user information acquisition means (0056, identifying group membership).

Claim 65: The merge information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 62, wherein said first and second designated user information acquisition means acquires said first and second designated user information items regarding said designated user from said first and second ones of said plurality of user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said first and second ones of said plurality of user information providing means (0069, drawing reference 218).

Claim 77: An information providing apparatus comprising:

a processor (61);

and a computer readable medium (62) storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions (0053) are executed by the processor (61), said merge information providing apparatus includes

means for selectively providing only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding a only designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may

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be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...” between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user information providing means corresponding to a distinction information that distinguishes said designated user registered to said designated user information (0015 and 0032) providing means and/or registered to a plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users providing means to a merge user information providing apparatus in response to a request from said merge user information providing apparatus (12), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including means for receiving an acquisition request (application 54), said designated user information items providing means and other said plurality of means for providing said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records), and merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers)

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communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 78: The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said information providing apparatus further comprises: means for saving said designated information items regarding said designated user (0003, 0030-0032, and figures 3 and 7; user records).

Claim 79: The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 77, wherein said designated information items regarding said designated user includes user

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information and/or group information of a group to which said designated user belongs, said group information including designated user information and/or group information of at least one of said plurality of user information providing means (0029, 0064, and figure 9).

Claim 81 : The information providing apparatus as claimed in claim 78, wherein said designated user information items providing means further comprises means for saving said designated user information regarding said designated user (0003, 0030-0032, and figures 3 and 7; user records).

Claim 83: A managing apparatus, comprising: a processor; and a computer readable medium storing processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus includes

a merge information providing apparatus (12) including a plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) a plurality of user information (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding a plurality of users (0015), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers);

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

means for transmitting information regarding set up of said plurality of user information items providing means (figure 1 and 0045); and

means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) in response to said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), said plurality of user information items including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) being registered to other at least two of said plurality of user information providing means (e.g. a user registered to two spokes) without

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distinguishing (0081, 38) the designated user by the user information providing means of which use is permitted, said merge information providing apparatus merging said acquired different designated user information items regarding said designated user (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) into a single merged designated user item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with

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said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 84: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus further comprises means for managing distinction information that distinguishes whether said designated user is registered to at least one of said plurality of user information providing means (0056).

Claim 85: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said distinction information managing means provides said distinction information of said designated user to said user information acquisition means in response to a request from said user information acquisition means (0056, identifying group membership).

Claim 86: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 84, wherein said user information acquisition means acquires said designated user information items (0042) regarding said designated user from said plurality of user information providing means by using permission information that permits the use of said distinction information and said plurality of user information providing means (0069, drawing reference 218).

Claim 88: The managing apparatus as claimed in claim 83, wherein, when the instructions are executed by the processor, said managing apparatus

further comprises means for displaying a screen for setting up said merge information providing apparatus and said plurality of user information providing means (0050).

Claim 100: A merge user information providing method in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic

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groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015), from among said plurality of user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...” between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items

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(0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 103: An information providing method implemented in a user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items a plurality of means for providing a plurality of

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information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

providing in response to a request from a merge user information providing apparatus (fig. 1), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including said plurality of user information items providing means, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), a plurality of different information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) regarding only a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus (figure 1).

Claim 105: A managing method implemented in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (0054) only designated user information items (0015), from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding only the designated user (0015, members that

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meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired plurality of different user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said designated user into a single merged designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means (0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 111: A computer-implemented information providing method in a user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said user information providing apparatus includes means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

providing only, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (fig. 1, #12), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including V of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032), said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing mean for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus (0032, figure 7 and 0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 113: A computer-implemented managing method in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively

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acquiring only designated user information items, a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015), from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...”)) between each of said means

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for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users (abstract, 0015) including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (abstract, 0015);

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record); and

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means (0045).

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and

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thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 116: A processor-readable medium storing a program code for providing merge user information in a merge user information providing apparatus, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing

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a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, comprising the steps of:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015), from among said plurality of user information items regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted (e.g. a user registered at a spoke computer/domain), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...” between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), the

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designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers), said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record)

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 119: A processor-readable medium for providing information in a user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

providing only, in response to a request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) from a merge user information providing apparatus (fig. 1, #12), said merge user information providing apparatus (12) including said plurality of user information items providing means (figure 1, 16, 14), said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. "...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...") between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items

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(0032, e.g. member identifiers), a plurality of different information items regarding a designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) from among said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users, the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups, said designated user corresponding to distinction information registered to at least one of said plurality of user information items providing means and/or other user information items providing mean for distinguishing said user to said merge user information providing apparatus (0032, figure 7 and 0045),

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended

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with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Claim 121: A processor-readable medium for managing information in a merge user information providing apparatus that includes a processor and a computer readable storage medium that stores processor-executable instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor, said merge user information providing apparatus including means for receiving an acquisition request, means for selectively acquiring only designated user information items, said merge user information providing apparatus including a plurality of means for providing a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users, and means for merging said acquired designated user information items, and wherein when the instructions are executed by the processor said method comprises:

receiving an acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user) relating to a designated user of the plurality of users

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(0015, members that meet the group membership criterion), the designated user being designated by a user ID (0032);

selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; “selected users are dynamically added to the new groups”, 0056 “To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”), in said means for selectively acquiring (application 54) only designated user information items (0015), from among said plurality of user information items (0015, member identifiers) regarding said plurality of users, only a plurality of different information items regarding only the designated user (0015, members that meet the group membership criterion) registered to at least one of said plurality of user information item providing means of which use is permitted, said user information items being different (0032; e.g. distinguishing user characteristics, 0042; e.g. “...user records may be completely different and correspond, for example, to only those users that are managed by the particular spoke...” between each of said means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers), the designated user being designated by a user ID, said plurality of information items regarding said plurality of users including user IDs, user names, user passwords, group IDs, group names, or membership of groups (0032, figure 7 and 0045), said designated user being registered to at least two of the plurality of user information items providing means without distinguishing said

user by whether or not the use of said user information items providing means is permitted (0032, figure 7 and 0045); and

merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30), in said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30; e.g. a computer system for storing a collection of records thus merged from spoke computers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) said acquired designated user information items (0015, member identifiers) from each of said plurality of user information providing means (38, 46, 0064) into a single designated user information item (0045; e.g. updating a users' memberships in their record).

transmitting a request regarding setup of said plurality of user information items providing means (0045)

wherein each of said plurality of means for providing (38, 46, 0064; e.g. user records) said plurality of user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers) communicates with said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.") only designated user information items (0032, e.g. member identifiers),

wherein said means for selectively acquiring (fig. 6; the synchronization of a new group, 0114, 0122; "selected users are dynamically added to the new groups", 0056 "To

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support dynamic groups, a conventional LDAP InetOrgPerson object may be extended with one or more attributes for which it is desirable to distinguish users and thus permit the *selection of members from the user space*. Typically, it is also desirable to include an *additional field that identifies what groups* a particular user is a member of.”) and said means for merging (fig. 1, drawing references 12 and 30) communicate (0050) with said means for receiving said acquisition request (0010, 0015; e.g. update of a dynamic group with the inclusion of a new user), and

wherein said means for receiving said acquisition request (0221) communicates with a web browser (0022; e.g. a user-interface component) via a network (20, 0036, 0051).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments in the reply filed 2/20/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues (page 45 of the reply) that McFadden describes synchronizing information regarding all users on hub and spoke computers *indiscriminately* and thus the Examiner is overlooking the distinction of acquiring only designated user information items regarding a designated user from a among a plurality of user information items regarding a plurality of users from each of a plurality of user information providing means in response to an acquisition request. Applicant further amends the claims to substantially recite “selectively acquiring information regarding only...”

Accordingly, Applicant argues (p. 46-47 of the reply) that McFadden does not disclose (1) selectively acquiring information regarding only a designated user from among information items regarding a plurality of users, and (2) selectively acquiring that information from each of the plurality of user information providing means in response to an acquisition request. Examiner respectfully disagrees in the following:

In respect to the claims and as seen above, Examiner cites drawing references 38, 46 and paragraph 0064 for reciting the information providing means. In particular, Examiner submits that these portions of McFadden teach means that provide user information. For one example, 38 and 46 are databases of user records that contain user data and thus are able to “provide” user information. McFadden further specifically teaches (with emphasis) that “*group spokes may be considered to be domains that hold users and attributes about the users, and that are the basis for providing user data that may be used in group inclusion rules*” (McFadden, paragraph 0064). With this, the Examiner submits that user records as well as spoke computers managing the user records teach the information providing means.

Applicant argues that McFadden does not teach selectively acquiring information regarding only a designated user from among information items regarding a plurality of users. Examiner respectfully disagrees for the citations given above addressing “selectively” (i.e. paragraphs 0114, 0122, and 0056). Therein, McFadden discloses selected users are dynamically added to new groups based upon the membership criteria. With this, the Examiner can conclude that a user is selected (and thus ‘designated’) to be included into a group. Further concluded is that the respective items

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of the user are selected with that user to be included into the group. As the spoke computer provide user attributes (0064) it is seen that the user's items (attributes) are selected from these means for providing to be included into the group membership.

Further, and in another interpretation, McFadden teaches an object for a user (InetOrgPerson object) that has an additional field for including what groups a *particular* user is a member of (McFadden, 0056). As a user may be a member of spoke or domain (e.g. McFadden 0042, 0056, 0071) and the user object including a field specifying the groups that a particular user is a member of (McFadden 0056), McFadden remains to teach selectively acquiring only designated user information. In another way, with this interpretation, McFadden teaches a *designated user* (i.e. particular user) and selectively acquiring only designated user information items (i.e. group identifiers which may be seen as group names or membership information) by acquiring only the information items belonging to that user.

In Accordance with Applicant's argument, it is argued that McFadden *indiscriminately* synchronizes user information based on what occurs in a single database (p. 47 of the reply). Examiner respectfully disagrees and asserts that McFadden teaches synchronizing between the hub and spoke computers (e.g. 0045) and thus synchronization of multiple databases (or information providers). Nonetheless, even if McFadden were seen to *indiscriminately* synchronize a user record (which is not conceded), the Examiner submits that each user in need of an update (i.e. the record of a 'designated user') would be updated with *only* information pertaining to that user (i.e.

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selectively) from the respective spoke computers. Thus included in the user record (e.g. managed by the hub computer) would be respective information for that user which had been managed by the spoke computers (0042 discusses user information managed by the spoke computers and may correspond to the respective spoke).

In furtherance, Examiner submits that McFadden's synchronization of group records also teaches the "selectively acquiring only designated user items..." by essentially filtering the spoke (and hub) computers to determine users to be included into a group (that is maintained on the hub computer, McFadden, 0073). In detail, figure 6 and supporting paragraphs teach directories in each of the group domains (hubs and spokes) are filtered (0078 and drawing reference 190) and subsequently identifiers are returned (i.e. to group object in hub, drawing reference 192). As read from McFadden, the information populated (acquired) includes membership domains and criterion as well as identifiers for the users that satisfy the criterion within the specified membership domains (fig 6 drawing reference 192 and paragraph 0079, McFadden). As interpreted from these teachings, Examiner submits that McFadden uses filtering to acquire user identifiers and membership information to create a new group in a synching process. As such, selected information items (i.e. user identifiers that satisfy the filtering criterion) of a designated user (i.e. user to be included in the group) are acquired from the respective spokes (i.e. each of user information providing means). Examiner further submits McFadden teaches "from among information items regarding a plurality of users" at least in paragraph 0015 wherein "such that the set of member identifiers

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identifies those users from a plurality of users that meet the group membership criterion for the dynamic group.

In closing remarks, Examiner submits that for lack of clarification, recitation of a 'designated' user appears in a broad fashion in that labeling a user as *designated* is merely descriptive material and thus may not be awarded appropriate weight. Accordingly, Examiner submits that further clarification (e.g. why the user is called a designated user, what the user is designated to, etc.) of 'designated' may be needed to advance prosecution. In light of a broadest reasonable interpretation (MPEP 2111) Examiner submits that McFadden reads on the presented claims as cited in the above rejection.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ROBERT TIMBLIN whose telephone number is (571)272-5627. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John R. Cottingham can be reached on 571-272-7079. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/ROBERT TIMBLIN/

Examiner, Art Unit 2167

/John R. Cottingham/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2167